

---

If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the elections board of North Carolina:

State Board of Elections  
506 North Harrington Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
(919) 733-7173 (voice)  
(919) 715-0135 (fax)  
[www.sboe.state.nc.us](http://www.sboe.state.nc.us)

If the North Carolina Board of Elections is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
(202) 307-2767 (voice)  
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)  
(202) 307-3961 (fax)  
[www.usdoj.gov/crt](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt)

*This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.*

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



# Restoring Your Right to Vote



---

The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

### **What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?**

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

### **Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in North Carolina?**

If you are a resident of North Carolina, you cannot vote while you are incarcerated for the conviction of a felony.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in North Carolina, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

### **I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?**

In North Carolina, you regain your right to vote once you have been unconditionally discharged from prison, probation or parole or discharged from a suspended sentence, or upon unconditional pardon, or the satisfaction of all conditions

of a conditional pardon. For a North Carolina conviction, the agency having jurisdiction over you at the time you were unconditionally discharged is required to issue a certificate to the clerk of the General Court of Justice in the county where you were convicted, and that clerk shall then file the certificate with the original record at no fee. Once this is done, you can simply register and vote.

### **What if my conviction was for a federal crime?**

If you were convicted of a felony by a federal court, you can re-gain your right to vote in North Carolina once you have been unconditionally discharged from prison, probation or parole or discharged from a suspended sentence, or upon unconditional pardon, or the satisfaction of all conditions of a conditional pardon. In order to re-gain your voting rights, you should take proof of your unconditional discharge to the clerk of the county where you live, and that clerk will issue and file a certificate specifying that you have been restored to your right to vote.

### **What if I was convicted in another state?**

If you were convicted of a felony by the court of a state other than North Carolina, you cannot vote while you are under sentence if the crime for which you were convicted would also have been a felony if it had been committed in North Carolina. You can still re-gain your right to vote in North Carolina once you have been unconditionally discharged from prison, probation or parole or discharged from a suspended sentence, or upon unconditional pardon, or the satisfaction of all conditions of a conditional pardon. In order to re-gain your voting rights, you should take proof of your unconditional discharge to the clerk of the county where you live, and that clerk will issue and file a certificate specifying that you have been restored to your right to vote.

### **What happens if I move to another state?**

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

### **What are North Carolina's other voter registration requirements?**

To vote in North Carolina, you must be a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old by the date of the next general election. You must not be registered to vote or claim the right to vote in any other state or county.

### **When do I need to register to vote?**

Registration is available year-round in North Carolina. However, in order to vote in an election, you must register at least 25 days before the election.

### **Where do I go to register?**

Registration is available at many places in North Carolina. You can register at your County Board of Elections, or you can pick up a mail-in registration form at most public libraries and high schools.

In addition, you can register to vote at the following state agencies when applying for services or transacting other business at that agency:

- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Services for the Blind
- Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Employment Security Commission